

Camp Read S'more



Joseph Hess Elementary School is Making it Happen!



WE ARE Joseph Hess Elementary School, located in Hammond, IN. We have approximately 580 students in grades PK – 5. School City of Hammond is a large, urban district located 30 miles outside of Chicago with approximately 13,000 students.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES We are located in the Hessville community of Hammond. Our student population consists of 626 students with about 74% poverty. The student body is very diverse being 39% Hispanic, 34% African-American, 22% White, and 3% Multi-racial.

OUR TEACHERS Hess is home to approximately 29 teachers and 15 support staff members that work collaboratively to ensure our students are provided with opportunities for success in school and their lives.

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE Camp Read S'more is a summer reading program that was established as a result of teachers coming together to provide reading opportunities for our students over summer break. When the local public library branch closed about 4 years ago, a group of teachers devised a plan to open our school library for seven weeks in June and July so that any students in the neighborhood could continue to read during the break. During this time, our library doors are open on Wednesday mornings to welcome our scholars and their friends. A different guest reader from the community reads to students each week. The program has grown to include a workshop model where students rotate between games, using the computers, reading independently, and checking out books. At the end of each day at Camp Read S'more, students are given prizes donated by our local sporting goods store, Cabela's. To celebrate student attendance and their commitment during the camp, we have a Camp-In where students can spend the night at school and enjoy different activities all night.

OUR STEPS Our Library/Media Specialist forms a team of staff members each year to help with planning the Camp. She coordinates the logistics of the camp by securing guest readers, prize donations, and supplies. Information is shared with students during live announcements beginning in May to generate excitement for the camp. Parent letters are sent home with the camp description and dates one month in advance. We post information on our school's social media accounts to reach all our Hess families as well. Staff members sign up to volunteer their time to help with the camp before school is over. Each week during the camp, parents and teachers are present to help facilitate the rotations. Students must keep track of their reading logs over the summer and turn them in at the beginning of the school year. This is a collective effort of the Hess staff and community to sustain the program each year.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

"Camp Read S'more helps me be a better reader and I get to see my friends and teachers over the summer." ~Nathan Witherspoon, 5th grade student

"Reading is such a fundamental skill for children and our kids need to have many opportunities to read. It is very rewarding to be able to open our library and see the students who participate each week." ~ Terri Childers, Library/Media Specialist

For more information about our school or corporation, email: emrobinson@hammond.k12.in.us or visit our website: <http://sch-hess.ss4.sharpschool.com/>